

# United States Department of the Interior

## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Nevada State Office  
P.O. Box 12000 (1340 Financial Blvd)  
Reno, Nevada 89520-0006  
<http://www.nv.blm.gov>

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EMS TRANSMISSION 2-19-08  
Instruction Memorandum No. NV-2008-022  
Expires 09/30/2009

To: Field Managers, Nevada

From: Ron Wenker  
State Director

Subject: Geothermal Drilling Permit (GDP) Processing

Program Areas: Geothermal Operations

**Purpose:** This Instruction Memorandum (IM) provides guidance to Field Offices (FOs) that are tasked with the approval of Notice of Intent (NOI) for exploration and Geothermal Drilling Permits (GDP) for development of geothermal resources on public lands. It specifically provides guidelines for time frames and processes to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of GDP and NOI reviews when addressing routine or non-controversial environmental and operational situations.

### **Policy/Action:**

FOs are directed to immediately incorporate and implement the following procedures, time frames and guidelines provided in the enclosed attachments (Attachments 1-1 and 2-2).

In order to track projects and ensure the timelines are being met, the Deputy State Director (DSD) for Minerals Management and the Division of Minerals Management will review all information required for permitting of NOIs and GDPs utilizing the Geothermal Resources Automated Support System (GRASS) database. In cases where the processing time frames are not met, first the State Geothermal Program Lead (SGPL) will follow up with appropriate FO staff to determine if the delay is reasonable. In cases where the SGPL determines the delays are not reasonable, they will be referred to the DSD, Minerals Management. The DSD, Minerals Management will then consult with FO management.

The Petroleum Engineer located in the Nevada State Office (NVSO) Minerals Management Division will be responsible to ensure the data in the GRASS database is entered correctly and timely. The GRASS database will require data entry from the State Office and all affected Field Offices. Each Field Manager will designate a person to maintain the field office's database in GRASS. The State Office Petroleum Engineer (SOPE) will coordinate with the FO designee to ensure all data is correct and current. The NVSO will also provide necessary training to FO staff.

The SOPE and other bureau GRASS database experts will conduct training once the Field Managers have designated a database steward. The Petroleum Engineer will visit each Field Office to conduct GRASS training.

This IM does not change the processing procedures of Notices of Intent (NOI) for exploration, which includes proposals to drill temperature gradient wells or conduct seismic exploration. As has been the case, each FO retains full authority to review and process these applications. However, FOs are reminded that the review time frames for GDPs are also applicable to NOIs. The NVSO will provide NOI review support when requested by a FO.

When a company proposes a specific project meeting, the involved FO will schedule the meeting within a reasonable time frame and notify the NVSO so staff may also attend. The information provided during this meeting should provide the basis for initiating the Native American consultation process, archeological clearances, and necessary environmental surveys, so the GDPs, when they are submitted, may be processed within the provided time frame guidelines (please refer to attachments).

**Time Frame:** This policy becomes effective upon the date of issuance

**Background:** As a result of the Geothermal Workshop held at the Nevada State Office on December 4, 2007 through December 6, 2007, there was consensus agreement between the Field Managers, DSD for Minerals, and the Associate State Director to adopt the timeframe templates (Attachments 1-1 and 2-1) for GDP processing. The need to conduct meetings with the geothermal industry in general, as well as individual company meetings to discuss specific project development was also discussed during the workshop. To meet the rapidly growing demand for streamlined permit processing, these templates will allow Nevada BLM to permit geothermal activities in a streamlined fashion.

**Budget Impact:** None

**Manual/Handbook Sections Affected:** None

**Coordination:** This guidance has been developed by the Nevada State Office (NV-920) and in coordination with the Nevada Field Offices.

Contact: Gary Johnson, Deputy State Director Minerals.

Signed by:  
Ron Wenker  
State Director, Nevada

Authenticated by:  
Pam Collins  
Staff Assistant

## 2 Attachments

- 1 – 2 Up front EA (1 p)
- 2 – 2 In house EA (1 p)